

Method of Disciple-Making – People & Proclamation

1. INTRO

- There are many ways of getting a message out in today's world
- According to Sting and The Police ... if you send a message in a bottle you get 100 billion replies ... that's a pretty good hit rate

- Australian businesses spend over \$13bn per year on advertising to get their message out there in the market place
 - TV, Radio, direct mail, internet

- Living in a digital world as we do ... most of the messages we receive these days are in digital form
- One of which is spam emails
 - Because far more cost effective for a business to deliver 100,000 emails to people's email addresses with a computer ... than pay for design, printing and mailout of fliers

- Of course, ... social media is another space for businesses to get their message across
 - FB, Twitter, Google ... constantly spam you with ads
 - So sophisticated is digital advertising ... ads you get on Facebook are often tailored to your personal profile based on the things you are viewing and searching for on Google
 - So, I was a bit surprised to see ads popping up on my FB feed recently for
 - Ashley and Martin
 - Specsavers
 - Weight Watchers 😊

- Last week in our discipleship series we looked at the **desire of discipleship**
 - That is ... what's going to move and motivate you and I to be disciple-making disciples that Jesus calls his followers to be

- In effect, last week was all about the **'why' of disciple-making**
- Over the next couple of weeks, I want to look at the **'how' of disciple-making**
 - What's the method?
 - What's the process?

- What **do I do** ... if I'm share in Jesus' mission and live to BE and MAKE disciples of Jesus?
- Because like our businesses and advertisers ... Christians have a message to get out there and make known to the world
- And the question today is ... **how is that message to get out?**

2. DISCIPLING TOWARDS CONVERSION

People

- After Jesus had risen from the dead, he commissioned his disciples to carry on his mission to go and make disciples
- In addition, he also promised to give them the power to do that
 - Acts 1:8 – *you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.*
- And not long after, on the day of Pentecost, the disciples experienced and powerful outpouring of the HS on them just as Jesus promised that would resource and embolden and equip them to get on with the task of making disciples
- And we saw last week in Acts 4 how Peter and John, filled with the Spirit, boldly declared the gospel to the ruling council in Jerusalem ... despite being uneducated, working class lads from the country

- The more the disciples proclaimed the gospel in and around Jerusalem ... more and more people became believers
- A movement was started, and it was gaining momentum at such a rapid pace that serious tension began to build within the religions establishment to the point they stoned one of the believers, Stephen, to death in Acts 7
- As a result, ... we read in Acts 8:1
 - *On that day a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria.*
- That persecution forced Christians to flee Jerusalem
 - Some like Phillip went to Samaria and preach the gospel
 - Peter likewise goes to Joppa, also in Samaria

- 11:19 picks up the story after the stoning of Stephen and says that some went even further ... out of Israel to Gentile lands of Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch
- And what did they do as they scattered?
 - v19 – they were speaking 'the message'

- What is that message?
 - v20 tells us ... they were telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus
- And what happened?
 - The Lord's hand was with them and many people believed
- That is ...
 - The gospel was preached, and people were converted

- News reaches Jerusalem
 - The leaders there are encouraged and excited that the gospel is going out and people are becoming disciples, just as Jesus said
 - They send Barnabas to Antioch to check things out and continue to speak the gospel and encourage the people
- And what happened?
 - v24 – *a great number of people were brought to the Lord.*

- Barnabas realises the church is getting to big for him to handle so he goes and finds Saul
 - Now after Saul's miraculous conversion and initial stay in Damascus ... Saul had returned to his home city of Tarsus
 - But God had other plans ... and so Barnabas gets on a boat, sails to Tarsus, finds Paul and says ...
 - "Mate! I've got a church that's going gang-busters and I need you to help me pastor this church and evangelise the city"
- And so, Saul returned Antioch to preach and teach the gospel
- And we're told the believers there were first called Christians there in Antioch

Implication

- Friends what we notice from this account of the early church is ... the method for making disciples
 - Well at least part of the method

- And that is ... making disciples involves people and proclamation [repeat]

People

- Who was it that took the gospel to Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch?
 - Those who were scattered as a result of the persecution
 - They were ordinary people
 - Bog-standard, every day, ordinary people ... who just also happened to be disciples of Jesus

- And so, we see they're doing exactly what Jesus commissioned the disciples to do in Matt 28:19 ... go and make disciples
- We said last week ... the way to read Matt 28:19 is
 - As you are going ... make disciples
 - As you are going to uni ... make disciples
 - As you are going to school ... make disciples
 - As you are going to work ... make disciples
 - As you are going on parenting ... make disciples
- Here in Acts 11 we could say
 - As you are fleeing persecution ... make disciples

- But it was also people like Barnabas and Saul who were involved in making disciples
- So, we see it was
 - Leaders and laity
 - Congregation and clergy
 - Not just leaders and clergy ... but laity and congregation too
 - Not just congregation and laity ... but clergy and leaders as well

- The message of the gospel doesn't go out via
 - A bottle
 - TV or radio adverts
 - Digital marketing
- It goes out via people ... people who are disciples of Jesus

- What this ... and many other NT passages show is that God's people are the agents by other people become disciples of Jesus

- We need to be clear ... making disciples is always God's work ...
 - Ultimately ... it's his plan, his salvation, his grace, his word, and his Spirit
- But God uses people to be his agents ... in particular he works sovereignly in and through people to achieve his purposes of bringing other people into his eternal kingdom

Application

- It's important for us to grasp this truth ... because it saves us from being proud and overvaluing our efforts
 - That is ... it's not about how successful, articulate, or knowledgeable you are

- You and I are just slaves and servants, planting and watering and praying for God to give growth
- However, it also guards us from undervaluing the importance of our efforts ... as if our obedience, faithfulness, and diligence in planting and watering are optional
- If you're a Christian ... you're one of God's **fellow** workers

Proclamation

- What are these people doing as they go?
- They're speaking to people about Jesus
- See that in
 - v19 – they were 'telling the message'
 - v20 – they were 'telling the good news of Jesus'
 - v23 – Barnabas encouraged them (with words) with the gospel
 - v26 – Saul and Barnabas > Taught the church and the people of the city ... with the gospel
- In other words, ... as God's people are 'going' they're proclaiming ... proclaiming the gospel ... the good news about Jesus

Application

- What's clear from this passage ... and every passage that you read in the NT where someone comes to faith in Jesus ... it's because the word of God is being proclaimed and shared
- It's not ... because the believers lived an exemplary life
 - The pagan's didn't look at these new believers and think to themselves ...
 - "Wow ... I'm really impressed with their morals and values and the way they live their life ... I think I'll become a Christian!"
- Unfortunately, ... many Christians and Christian institutions fall into this way of thinking
 - If I live a good life among my non-Christian friends ... that will be enough
- To illustrate – let me read you a Christian blog post (satire)
- *COLUMBUS, OH—Stephanie Goodwill of Wysh Financial Corporation announced on Wednesday that she's surprised she hasn't had the opportunity to share her faith at work.*
"I've worked at this company for 15 years," Goodwill revealed during a phone interview Thursday. "I've gotten to know lots of people I work with. Take Joe—he's always talking about his marriage troubles. And Kathy? She's a single mom who talks a lot about how hard it is raising three kids on her

own. I really think they need Jesus. I'm sure any day now they'll start asking me about Him, right?"

"It really shouldn't be that complicated," she continued. "I mean, I smile at people as I pass them in the hall. I hold doors open for people. I even have a good attitude on conference calls! I still don't understand why people don't ask me if Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life."

"I guess all I can do is keep praying and keep waiting," she added.¹

- Don't get me wrong ... living authentic, distinctive, Christ-like lives ... is vital to making disciples
 - In fact, that's what we're going to be speaking about next week
- However, if all Christians did was live distinctive lives ... there'd be no new disciples ... because for people to become disciples of Jesus ...
 - there must be proclamation
 - they need to hear the gospel

- Notice we're not told exactly what they said or how they said it
- That's because proclaiming the gospel is not an exact formula or process

- Last week I showed you Discovery Bible Method
 - Summarise
 - A-B-C > Ask, Bible, Commit
 - Bible > 5-10 verses
 - I read, you read it, I recount, you recount
 - Share what you think it saying about God, Jesus, Us
 - What are you going to do considering what you've read?
 - Come back and ask each other how you went
- That's people proclaiming ... people sharing gospel

- It's a great tool or method for sharing the gospel
 - But it's not a silver bullet
 - It's not the only way
- It's just one tool in the disciple making tool bag ... and you can choose whatever tool you feel is most appropriate for the occasion or you're most comfortable with

- Let me show you a couple of more tools to add to your disciple-making tool bag apart from DBM

¹ <http://babylonbee.com/news/employee-still-waiting-co-workers-ask-faith/>

- Another way for you to share the gospel is simply by sharing your favourite Bible verse
- **Illustration – Favourite Bible Verse**
- I heard the story recently of a Christian leader speaking at a conference and was trying to encourage people there to be disciple making disciples
- He said this
 - I want you to turn to the person next to you and tell them your favourite verse from the Bible?
 - Now I want you to tell them ... **why** it's your favourite verse?
 - There you do ... you've shared the gospel

- Very few verses better or more succinct than 1 Peter 3:18
 - *1 Peter 3:18 – For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God.*
- Or what about
 - *Ephesians 2:4-5 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions*

- Many tools in a disciple-making tool bag ...
 - Don't have to stick to using one tool

- Something else you can do to share the good news of Jesus with others is learning a gospel outline that you can have in your head to remind of the things you ought to talk about

- Using John 3:16
 - God loves
 - God gives
 - We believe
 - We live

- Another outline is to use is simple three words – identity, mission, call
 - Identity – Who Jesus is
 - Mission – Why he came
 - Call – What he wants from us
- Jesus Identity
 - Jesus is the Christ, the king of the world and king of our life > we are not

- Jesus Mission
 - Jesus came to die for your sin and reconcile you back to God > without him you'll pay for your own sin and have no hope for eternity
- Jesus Call
 - Jesus calls on us to recognise him as Lord and saviour and turn to him in repentance and faith

- It's not about saying everything or saying it eloquently that matters
 - It's about saying enough

- And if you share these things with someone ... however hard you find it and however haltingly you say it, that's the gospel
 - You proclaim Christ as he asks you to
 - The rest, as we said earlier ... is up to God

3. DISCIPLING TOWARDS CHRIST

- As we've been working our way through this series on discipleship and disciple-making ...
 - sometimes we're talking about making disciples of people who aren't Christian ... what is often referred to as evangelism
 - sometimes we're talking about making disciples of those who are already Christian ... what you might have heard expressed as discipleship

- But one of things I'd like you take out of this series ... is that discipleship or disciple-making ... is both those things
 - Disciple-making / discipleship spans right across the spectrum as we want to see people move towards the right ... and the goal of becoming mature in Christ

- In other words
 - When we talk about discipleship or disciple-making ... we are talking about
 - Discipling people towards conversion, AND
 - Discipling people towards Christ

- So, when it comes to our disciple-making method of people and proclamation ... this is true regardless of whether you're talking about discipling a non-believer or a believer
 - The way you make disciples of non-Christians is by people proclaiming the gospel
 - The way you make disciples of Christians is by people proclaiming the gospel

- Turn with me to Titus 2 [p1182]
- Tom will preach on Titus 2 more fully in a few weeks, however I want to draw out this point from a couple of verses here

- Paul is writing to Titus who is the elder / pastor of the church in Crete to encourage him to carry on the work of leading and pastoring the people there
 - In other words, ... Paul is encouraging Titus to keep on with the work of making disciples

- In v11-12 – Paul writes ...
 - *For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age,*
- In other words
 - Paul wants to see the Christians there to
 - grow in godliness
 - resist temptation
 - grow in self control
 - be obedient and faithful
 - live godly lives
 - He wants to see them moving the right ... growing as disciples
 - He's urging Titus to ensure making of disciples continues to be a priority in his church

- And how are they to do that?
- What is going to transform and mature them to grow them to be like Jesus?
 - v11 – *it is the grace of God that brings salvation to all men that teaches them this*
 - It's the message of the gospel

- In other words, ... Paul is saying when you teach the gospel to Christians ... it transforms their lives
 - It's the word of God that helps disciples of Christ grow and mature to become more like Christ
- Who teaches the gospel?
 - People!

- If you look at verses 1-10 ... Paul is urging the church ... that is, Titus and the congregation, to teach others

- Titus is to
 - Teach older men v1
 - Teach older women v3
 - Encourage younger men v6
 - Teach slaves v9
- Older women to teach younger women v4
- In other words, ... the way to make disciples is by people proclaiming the word of God to each other

Application

- Jesus command to go and make disciples doesn't stop when a person becomes a Christian
- It's a life-long project
- Disciple-making is an ongoing process for the Christian until they die or Jesus returns

- Which is why we place so much emphasis here at C@P on
 - Being a regular member of a growth group
 - Pouring our time and energy into Kids Church and Altitude Youth
 - Starting our youth and young adult's discipleship pathway that involves
 - Discipleship mentor meeting
 - in a small group with our youth
 - 1:1 with our young adults
 - to read the Bible and pray

- Because the kids and youth and young adults who are part of C@P are young disciples of Jesus
- Our responsibility is to be engaged in the work of growing them as disciples Jesus who are
 - Firm in their convictions
 - Trusting in Jesus as Lord and Saviour
 - Understanding what it means to be a disciple of Christ
 - Putting off sin
 - Putting on godliness and holiness
 - Seeing the Christian life modelled and lived out before them

- As I said last week ... like most evangelical churches in Australia, I think we're doing a pretty good job of disciple-making in this area
 - With GG, Kids Church, Youth Group & Discipleship groups we have the framework in place for making disciples

- We are blessed to have about 40 people ... 2/5 of our people directly involved in disciple-making ministry – that’s fantastic! Praise God!
- I want to thank all of you who are making disciples of our kids, youth and young adults
- Keep at it ... for what you are doing has eternal consequences
- If you’d like to be more involved in being a disciple-maker here at C@P ... let me know on the Comms Card
 - The more people we have sharing and proclaiming the gospel the better
- But it’s not just the formal disciple-making ministries we have in place
 - It’s the informal which his just as important
 - If you’re a parent teaching your children about Jesus ... then that’s disciple-making > more on this in a few weeks
 - When you ask a young person after church ... what did you learn today? ... that’s disciple-making
 - When you ask someone “What can I pray for you?” and then pray with them ... that’s disciple making
- But regardless of what form it takes ... the method is still the same
 - Its people ... proclaiming, sharing, teaching, the word of God
 - It’s men and women, young and old ... ordinary people like you and I ... sharing the gospel and talking about how that should impact on and shape our lives
 - That’s all disciple-making

4. CONCLUSION

- I pray last week you went away with a deeper desire to be the disciple makers Jesus calls his followers to be
 - Not just because he commands you
 - But because of the darkness and eternal death people are facing ... and you were facing ... until a person puts their trust in Jesus
- I pray today might encourage you to know what to do with that desire
 - That you are one of God’s fellow workers ... his people
 - Your job and my job is to proclaim the gospel in whatever form, opportunity, time of day, length of discussion that may take
- It doesn’t matter who you are or how you do it
- Because God uses ordinary people just like you ... just like me ... to make disciples of all the nations as we proclaim the gospel to the world around us

PRAY